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of the present city of Racine. Today one hundred and seventy living descendants, engaged in a great variety of occupations, are scattered over Wisconsin and states farther west.

The letters are from son to father, and begin with the voyage to America. They cover eight years, to Edwin Bottomley's death in 1850, and narrate in great detail his career in the land of promise. With but few exceptions the letters have been preserved. The father carefully kept them in the family archives in England until his own migration to the Wisconsin homestead, whence they found their way into the custody of the State historical society of Wisconsin in 1914.

The editor's comments upon the importance of the papers does credit to his democracy. He points out that while in 1809, *annus mirabilis*, were born Lincoln, Darwin, Gladstone, there was but one each of these, while there were millions of Edwin Bottomleys, humble, hard-working, God-fearing, who in their aggregate have been a more potent force in history than any of the chosen few. They stand for the sacrifice of fathers and mothers for their children, the sturdy character, the disciplined powers, the hopeful outlook, and the will to endure hardships, which have contributed to make America.

Footnotes are few, as the text is largely self-explanatory. A brief appendix contains an interesting document, "An address from the inhabitants of the English settlement, Wisconsin, United States of America, to their friends in England, on behalf of the erection of a new chapel." Several well-chosen illustrations aid the text, and a good index is supplied.

G. N. FULLER

History of economic legislation in Iowa. By Ivan L. Pollock. [Iowa economic history series, edited by Benjamin F. Shambaugh] (Iowa City: State historical society of Iowa, 1918. 386 p.)

In this compilation of economic legislation enacted in Iowa, Mr. Pollock has made a distinct contribution to the increasing literature with respect to the practical solution of public economic problems. The volume corresponds in the Iowa economic series to the useful *History of social legislation in Iowa* by Mr. Briggs in the Iowa social history series. In view of the broad powers of the state to legislate for the general welfare of the people, there is ample justification for this review of "the economic legislation of a typical State of the Middle West" in order to show "just what that State has done in this interesting field of governmental direction and control."

In limiting the scope of the present work Mr. Pollock defines economic legislation as "legislation enacted for the purpose of bettering and protecting the economic condition of the people of the State." According-

ly, he excludes all legislation guided by ethical rather than economic considerations, and includes the history of laws relating to transportation, agriculture and stock raising, mines and mining, conservation and internal improvements, general corporations, insurance, banking, building and loan associations, trade and commerce, labor, the power of municipal corporations in enacting economic legislation, and taxation.

The volume presents a comprehensive account of the economic legislation in Iowa, which, beginning as almost a primitive wilderness, has developed into one of the most prosperous states in the middle west. A typically American population, engaged predominantly in agricultural pursuits, the people of Iowa have shown a sturdy common sense in the solution of their public economic problems. The progress made has been slow but steady. Laws once passed have been amended with care, and in contrast to the radicalism of so many other commonwealths, Iowa has shown a marked conservatism in the passage of economic legislation of a practical rather than a theoretical type. The history of this economic legislation constantly illustrates the conflict between reactionary and progressive tendencies, between decentralizing and centralizing influences, that is usually characteristic of state government.

Only a few of the more striking features of economic legislation in Iowa can be noted. The struggle to secure good roads was marked by the usual conflict between progressive and reactionary tendencies. Finally a law was enacted which, by establishing a state highway commission, provided for a more centralized control over roads and bridges. The history of railway legislation is typical of the middle west. First came a period of construction, in which strong inducements were offered to secure the greatly needed railroads. Next was a period of reaction, 1870 to 1878, marked by numerous regulations, and followed by the creation of a railroad commission with only advisory power. Finally, a board of railroad commissioners was created in 1888 with broad regulatory power.

Iowa, as an essentially rural state, has passed a number of laws relating to agriculture, all of them either of an educational or a protective nature. No laws have been passed directly affecting production, and the result has been to further agricultural interests while preserving the American spirit of self-dependence. A similar spirit has been shown in dealing with corporations, in the passage of laws that protect the public but do not attempt to set forth the utopian schemes of theoretical reformers. Of special interest is the Iowa "blue sky law" passed in 1913 in order to stop the sale of fraudulent securities. Unfortunately the federal courts declared this law unconstitutional, but another act was passed in 1915 which will, it is hoped, accomplish the same end.

The history of fiscal legislation in Iowa is also of interest in view of the present widespread agitation for tax reform in other states of the middle west, which, like Iowa, have discovered that a system of taxation designed originally for a sparsely settled rural community does not meet modern demands. The fundamental principles of the Iowa system of taxation, according to Mr. Pollock, include: "the ad valorem principle of listing property, the assessment of general property by township, town, or city, and township, County and State review or equalization." This system has remained practically unchanged throughout the entire period of the state's history and has become thoroughly unsatisfactory, inasmuch as many changes are necessary to secure "equality or uniformity and universality of taxation." So far the legislature has refused to enact into law the recommendations of special tax commissions created in 1893 and 1911.

Necessarily this history of economic legislation contains many details, yet the style is clear, with much analysis, and the historical background is not ignored. A more extended account of the practical working of these laws would have been desirable, but the space available precluded such discussion. An excellent feature of the book is the extensive use, at the end of chapters, of summaries; these are of much assistance to the casual reader. For more intensive study there are numerous references to the different statutes and to illustrative material, while there is also a comprehensive index. The volume should prove of special value in legislative reference libraries; it is, in fact, indispensable for the study of the practical solution of the economic problems of state government.

B. W. BOND, JR.

Spirit lake massacre. By Thomas Teakle. (Iowa City: State historical society of Iowa, 1918. 336 p.)

This is a beautifully printed book of 336 pages giving the history of the Spirit lake massacre of 1857. Offhand one might be disposed to think that an affair so isolated and obscure as this tragic event could not reasonably command as extensive a narrative as Mr. Teakle has supplied. One who reads the book, however, will hardly be disposed to make this criticism. The narrative is not too extensive adequately to trace the whole sad story of the conditions leading up to the massacre, the event itself, and the subsequent captivity and fortunes of the parties concerned in it. Whether Mr. Teakle has apportioned the space at his disposal to the best advantage is another question. There are approximately seventy thousand words, divided into thirty-one chapters. Some of these are but half a dozen pages in length while their average length is about 2250 words. Notwithstanding the length of the narrative as a whole, one gets the impression that some of the chapter discussions are